

Shalom AZ Ministries

In Pursuit of Israel's Redemption



“When Nothing Seems to Be Happening”

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Devotion and Discussion Questions

Key Texts (TLV): Zech. 1:1-6; Hag. 2:20-23; Num. 25:10-13; Is. 57:15; Rev. 6:9-11

There are seasons when we know what God has promised, but what we see around us seems to contradict it. We expected movement, but everything appears still. We anticipated restoration, but we're still looking at the ruins. We thought that obedience would bring immediate momentum, but instead we were met by obstacles, exhaustion, and discouragement. That was the condition of the people of Judah. They had returned from Babylonian exile, laid the foundation of the Temple, and then allowed nearly twenty years of opposition and disappointment to wear them down. They were back in the land, but the land did not look as it once had. The work before them was overwhelming, and they were greatly outnumbered.

Three months after Zechariah's initial call to repentance, the word of the LORD came to him again. Zechariah's name means “ADONAI remembers,” (*Zachar-Yahu*, “He Remembers – the LORD does”) and that is already part of the message. God had not forgotten His people. In the darkness of the night, Zechariah (“ADONAI Remembers”) saw something that could not be seen merely by looking at the circumstances. *“In the night I saw, and behold, a man riding upon a red horse was standing among the myrtle trees that were in the ravine”* (Zech. 1:8). The people may have felt hidden, humiliated, and forgotten, but the vision revealed that the Angel of ADONAI was standing in their midst.

1. IN THE DARKNESS, HE IS STILL IN OUR MIDST

The myrtle was not the proud cedar or the lofty, far-reaching oak. It was a lowly, fragrant shrub that grew throughout Israel and became a fitting symbol for the covenant people. In Zechariah's vision, the myrtles were located in a ravine—in the depths. This was a picture of Israel's condition. They were lowly, discouraged, and living under the shadow of what had been lost. Yet the central truth of the vision was not merely that the myrtles were in the depths. It was that the Angel of ADONAI was standing among them. God's people were in the depths, but they were not alone in the depths.

The darkness did not mean that God was absent. In fact, it was in the night that Zechariah saw. When circumstances were dark, the Lord gave him spiritual sight. The people could look around and see only weakness, unfinished work, and the evidence of their humiliation. God showed Zechariah that there was far more happening than they could see. ADONAI had dispatched His messengers to patrol the earth, and the Angel of ADONAI stood IN THE MIDST OF His people. The enemy may roam throughout the earth seeking someone to devour, but he is not the only one who is walking to and fro. Heaven is not inattentive. The Lord sees, the Lord knows, and the Lord remains present among His people.

2. IN THE SILENCE, HE IS STILL INTERCEDING

The riders returned from patrolling the earth and reported, *"We have walked throughout the earth, and behold, all the earth sits quietly and is still"* (Zech. 1:11). At first, that might sound like good news, but it was deeply troubling for the restoration community. Two months earlier, ADONAI had declared through Haggai, *"I am going to shake the heavens and the earth, and I will overturn the throne of kingdoms"* (Hag. 2:21–22). Yet nothing seemed to be shaking. The nations were sitting peacefully and securely while Jerusalem remained broken. Things were quiet, but it was the wrong kind of quiet. The people were waiting for God to intervene, and the world seemed to continue without interruption.

Then the Angel of ADONAI cried out, *"ADONAI-Tzva'ot, how long will You withhold compassion on Jerusalem and on the cities of Judah with whom You have been angry for 70 years?"* (Zech. 1:12). He stood in the midst of the myrtles and interceded on their behalf. He identified Himself with their pain and gave voice to the question in their hearts: "How long?" And ADONAI did not answer with rebuke, but with *"pleasant, comforting words"* (Zech. 1:13). His first comforting word was that He remained exceedingly zealous for Jerusalem and Zion. His second was that He was exceedingly angry with the nations that were at ease and had gone beyond what He had permitted. Silence did not mean indifference. Delay did not mean that God had forgotten. He was still passionate for His people, and He would deal with those who had helped to further their own calamity.

3. IN THE WAITING, HE IS STILL RETURNING

The comforting words of ADONAI did not end with reassurance about His feelings. God's zeal would lead to action. *"Therefore," thus says ADONAI, "I will return to Jerusalem with compassion. My House will be built there," declares ADONAI-Tzva'ot, "and a measuring line will be stretched out over Jerusalem"* (Zech. 1:16). The glory of ADONAI had departed from the Temple, but He promised to return with mercies—with compassions. His House would be established, and Jerusalem would not remain confined to its broken and diminished condition. The measuring line would be stretched out because God was preparing for restoration, order, and expansion.

The Lord then commanded Zechariah to proclaim again, *"My cities will again overflow with prosperity and ADONAI will again comfort Zion and will again choose Jerusalem"* (Zech. 1:17). What had once been scattered in judgment would now overflow from goodness. God had not changed His choice. He had not abandoned His covenant purposes. The immediate rebuilding of the Temple was part of the promise, but the vision pointed beyond that moment to something greater and more glorious than they could yet understand. God was not merely repairing what had been damaged. He was moving His people toward the fullness of what He had always intended.

CONCLUSION

The people of Judah were looking at ruins, delays, opposition, and nations that appeared completely at ease. God showed Zechariah another reality. The Angel of ADONAI was standing among the myrtle trees. Heaven's messengers were patrolling the earth. The

cries of God's people were being carried before ADONAI-Tzva'ot. The Lord remained zealous for Jerusalem, angry with those who had harmed her, and committed to returning with compassion. What looked forgotten had never been forgotten. What appeared inactive was still under the watchful authority of God.

Perhaps you are in a season where everything feels quiet and still. You know what God has spoken, but you cannot see the shaking, rebuilding, or restoration you expected. Do not allow the circumstances to convince you that He has lost His zeal for you. Bring Him your disappointment, your exhaustion, and your "How long?" Repent of the discouragement, apathy, or self-reliance that has caused you to stop building what He called you to build. Surrender your timeline to Him and receive His comforting words again. **He is with you in the depths. He is interceding in the silence. He is returning with compassion.** Rise again, take hold of the work He has placed before you, and trust that His goodness will accomplish far more than you can presently see.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. What does the image of the Angel of ADONAI standing among the myrtle trees reveal about God's relationship with His people in seasons of humiliation and discouragement?
2. Why would the report that "all the earth sits quietly and is still" have been troubling to the people of Judah?
3. Where in your life have you interpreted God's delay or apparent silence as a lack of concern?
4. Is there something God once called you to build or pursue that discouragement has caused you to leave unfinished?
5. What would it look like for you to surrender your expected timeline and begin trusting again in God's zeal, compassion, and faithfulness?

CLOSING PRAYER:

Avinu Malkhenu, Our Father, Our King, ADONAI-Tzva'ot, thank You that You do not abandon Your people in the depths. When circumstances are dark and everything appears quiet, open our eyes to see that You are still present, still watching, and still working. Forgive us for allowing delay, disappointment, or opposition to convince us that You have forgotten us. Awaken us from discouragement and apathy, and restore our willingness to build what You have called us to build.

Yeshua, thank You for standing in the midst of Your people and interceding on our behalf. Teach us to bring You our honest cry of "How long?" while continuing to trust Your heart. Let Your good and comforting words take root within us. Return to the broken places with compassion, establish Your House within us, and cause our lives to overflow from Your goodness. May we remain faithful until everything You have promised is brought to completion.

B'Shem Yeshua, In the name of Yeshua, amen.